

## **MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**

### **Regular Meeting February 24, 2014 Lincoln Center**

**PRESENT:** Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Pattacini, Pazda, Scappaticci, Stafford, Thames

**ALSO PRESENT:** Interim Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kisiel, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

**ABSENT:** Leon

#### **A. OPENING**

##### **A.1.& 2. Meeting Called to Order**

The meeting was called back to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairperson Pattacini, who explained the meeting had been called to order earlier and entered into executive session. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

##### **A.3. Adoption of Minutes of Public Forum**

**ADOPTED – Minutes of Public Forum of the Board of Education of February 6, 2014. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

##### **A.4. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of February 10, 2014. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

**B. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT – PART I**

**B.1. Introduction of new High School Football Coach**

**Dr. Kisiel** welcomed Roy Roberts to the District. Mr. Roberts previously worked at Newington High as a teacher, dean of students, and a coach. Mr. Roberts will assume three positions in Manchester, including MHS guidance counselor, assistant principal to assume some administrative responsibilities as Mr. Geary increases his transition work, and last as the new head football coach. Mr. Roberts and his family reside in Manchester and his two kids attend Robertson and Bennet.

**Mr. Crockett** previously met the coach during the interview. He feels Mr. Roberts will be an asset to the town and wishes him the best.

**Mr. Thames** congratulated Mr. Roberts. He understands how critical it is to merge athletics and academics. He thanks Mr. Roberts for taking on this position to be a role model for our young people.

**Mr. Pattacini** looks forward to seeing the students grow under Mr. Roberts’ leadership.

**C. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Dr. Kisiel** presented four items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

**C.1. Personnel Action**

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

**C.2. Transfer of Funds**

Details had already been provided to the Board members in their agenda folders.

- Transfer from Manchester High School Music – Other Purchased Services to Manchester High School Admin Computer Supplies and materials account in the amount of \$3,025
- Transfer from Manchester High School Career Education Computer Supplies and Materials to Manchester High School Student Activities Field Trip account in the amount of \$1,000
- Transfer from Illing Middle School Administrative Postage to Illing Middle School Administrative General Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$3,700

- Transfer from Highland Park School Administrative Postage to Highland Park Language Arts Instructional Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$1,200

**C.3. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$18,500 for FY 13-14 for the summer school program, funded by tuition payments**

**C.4. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$394,152 for FY 13-14 for the Technology Grant which was received from the State Department of Education to replace and/or retire computers**

**The Chairman called for a motion.**

**Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar, as outlined in Section C of tonight's agenda.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

**D. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, came to the meeting from the wake of a friend. Over the past several months he has lost several friends much too soon. It has made him realize that time is precious. He wonders if he is wasting time caring about a school the Board has given up on. When faced with a decision with no right answer, Mr. Aiken tries to pick out the right choice, which is generally the hardest option, takes the most effort, requires the most sacrifice, and forces him to face his fears. Why is having a neighborhood school in the east and west side neighborhoods right? It is not the easiest choice. It forces the town to face their fears. Too many people have buried their heads in the sand about the racial and socioeconomic makeup in Manchester. Community schools chop at the root of the achievement gap rather than at the branches. Mr. Aiken feels the achievement gap is getting worse. He is not sure if it is because the Board doesn't care or doesn't understand. He assumes that they care, because they are here, so it must be that they do not understand the problem. The achievement gap will not be solved with the common core, magnet schools, smart boards, chrome books, teacher evaluations, PTA's, or politicians. He feels you have all lost the point and are not only making a complicated mess of our schools but slowly destroying our neighborhood communities by closing schools. This is done in the name of data, efficiency, and tax dollars. The education of his children is not a business proposition, but a labor of love. Mr. Aiken feels that until you understand the problem you can't solve it. Considering closing Washington makes him believe you don't understand what these neighborhoods need. Mr. Aiken will try to make you understand.

Ms. Georgette Reyes, 192 Center Street, is a grandmother with four grandkids who graduated from Washington and two who are currently attending there. She loves Washington and she is known in the halls as her grandkid's grandma. She is here to fight for her grandkids. Closing Washington will not solve any problems, but will create problems. Ms. Reyes states that when the Board closed Nathan Hale they put those children in Washington and other schools, and now you want to uproot those kids again. It is not right. Washington is well loved in this community.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, pointed out Black History month is coming to a close and this is the 88<sup>th</sup> year celebrating this. It was started by Carter Woodson. CPTV had a documentary on Alice Walker and Supreme Court Justice Constance Baker Motley. He is rooting for *Twelve Years a Slave* for the Academy Awards. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *Back to School*. He thinks there are some good things happening in Manchester. In the March *Ebony* magazine there was an article on education. He would like Dr. Ratchford to speak on different learning styles. An article in *TIME* magazine on obesity was recommended, as this may effect learning. He wants everyone to achieve. All children should be started equally with respect. He wants us to look at cultural backgrounds. He feels he is not being listened to.

Ms. Victoriana Reyes, 167 East Center Street, comes as a parent from Washington. Her son attends there and does not do well with changes. Closing the school will hurt students like him. She wants another solution to be found. Closing Nathan Hale didn't solve the problem and the big picture needs to be looked at.

Ms. Betsy Larose, 55 Birch Street, has a son at Washington. Once Nathan Hale closed the families on Birch Street attend three different school districts. By closing Washington that community will be split up just like Nathan Hale was. Ms. Larose feels bonds are formed by neighbors going to school together. She is on the PTA Board and at a meeting someone mentioned Washington has one of the lowest teacher absenteeism rates, that says something about the staff. Ms. Larose is always greeted and finds a friendly atmosphere at Washington. The teachers there are wonderful. They offer great tools and provide help for the students. Her son's speech problem was addressed within a week of her asking. She would not want her children moved to a different school and another community broken up within that neighborhood.

## **E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II**

### **E.1. School Facilities Referendum Projects Update**

**Dr. Kisiel** reported that in 2012 the community passed a referendum with specific projects included. Tonight Mr. Christopher Till provided a report on those projects. Some have been completed, some are planned for the summer, and others have been postponed. The presentation is available on the website.

**Mr. Pattacini** wondered if the last page of items had estimates for the elementary school work. Mr. Till stated the estimates were in various degrees. The Verplanck estimate is detailed, the masonry repair projects have estimates but are based on a scope of work that was not fully comprehensive. The Waddell project estimates are comprehensive for the balance of the critical masonry work. The Washington and Robertson electrical service work has not been estimated at this time other than what was done at Keeney and Buckley Schools.

## **E.2. School Facilities Critical Needs Report Update**

**Dr. Kisiel** reported two years ago the list of critical facility needs for all schools. The Board is at the point of discussing a range of options in regards to school facilities. In consideration of those options, the Board needs to take into consideration the work that needs to be done in our schools currently and how that may be rolled into any potential school renovations. Mr. Richard Ziegler provided the Board with the critical needs list, which is available on the website so the public can examine it.

Mr. Ziegler reported that when he last presented to the Board in March 2013 the critical assessment list totaled \$27 million. Since then we deleted \$3.778 million by completing projects financed through the referendum and the capital improvement plan. Another \$11 million was added for a new total of \$34 million. Of the \$11 million, approximately \$3.5 million address security issues and \$8 million is additional work put on the critical assessment that was on the capital budget the last several years. The two lists previously were not consistent and some items were on one list and not the other, so by blending the two lists they will now reflect the same information.

**Ms. Pazda** asked for clarity on Priority 1, 2 and 3. Mr. Ziegler clarified that Priority 1 items need to be done soon, and Priority 2 can be postponed a little, with Priority 3's being able to be put off even longer. At this point some prior Priority 2's are now Priority 1's.

Mr. Ziegler went through the list of critical needs.

**Mr. Stafford** wondered if any of these items can be accomplished with a state reimbursement or is the full cost our burden. Mr. Ziegler pointed out many of the items would be addressed with a like-new renovation or bonding, so some items can be recovered in that respect.

**Mr. Scappaticci** wondered what K wing is at the high school. Mr. Ziegler stated that it is the wing that currently houses Bentley.

**Mr. Pattacini** thanked Mr. Ziegler and noted this information will be helpful as the Board starts to look at decisions regarding the improvement projects. For Board members, he pointed out that of the schools that are being considered currently, there is about \$5 million in work slated for those schools.

### **E.3. School Improvement Plan – Buckley Elementary**

**Dr. Kisiel** introduced the Principal of Buckley, Matt Daly, who presented his School Improvement Plan. Mr. Daly's power point is available on the website.

Mr. Daly reported that Buckley is a great place to grow and explore. Mr. Daly highlighted areas that support reading, numeracy, school climate, and the home-school connection. The mission of Buckley Elementary is to provide a safe and healthy environment for all that is strengthened by home and the community. Students are encouraged and supported in academics, arts, physical, social, and emotional growth with the intension of fostering a lifelong desire to learn.

**Mr. Stafford** wondered what PBIS stands for. Mr. Daly reported this is Positive Behavior Intervention Supports. This is a framework where we expect students to be safe, respectful, and responsible and we teach the kids what that looks like throughout the building, i.e. in the classroom, hallways, cafeteria, buses, etc. When students are doing a wonderful job meeting these expectations they are recognized at a pep rally.

**Ms. Pazda** feels there are many wonderful things going on. She is curious about the grade levels that take NWEA. Mr. Daly reported that is grades K-5. Ms. Pazda wondered about the kids performing at the lowest levels, who need extra time and extra support. She wonders what is in place to help those students. She wondered if there are there certified reading people working with those challenged kids. Mr. Daly stated that the literacy and numeracy coaches provide assistance to the teacher for Tier 2 instruction. Small group instruction in reading is in place as well as math. He also employs a tutor who was a certified teacher, to help in the classrooms.

**Mr. Pattacini** focused on the African American group, noting the increases are the lowest and what specifically is being done, and what is the root cause and what can help that group. Mr. Daly pointed out some interventions, including small group instruction, and finding out what the student is struggling with. With Tier 2 and 3 students their progress is reviewed every 6-8 weeks. The district equity facilitator recommends books that may be of high interest for those students. Mr. Pattacini pointed out the jump Hispanic students made. Mr. Daly feels the teachers have embraced small group instruction and they look at every avenue to focus on areas students need to improve.

**Mr. Thames** is wondering about how parents are engaged in the educational process. Mr. Daly feels communication is key, including through School Messenger, by being present outside inviting parents to come into the building to read to the kids, to attend pep rallies, etc. Parent meetings are held when students are struggling, to help figure out how to help the students.

## **F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **G. NEW BUSINESS**

### **G.1. Revision of Teacher Evaluation Program**

**Dr. Kisiel** reviewed at the last meeting he had outlined the State Board of Education approved changes to the program. The teacher evaluation committee met this past week and reviewed the proposed changes. The district administrators reviewed the changes as well and both groups recommended approving those changes.

**Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board of Education adopt the revision of the Teacher Evaluation Program as presented by the administration. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

## **H. COMMUNICATIONS**

**Dr. Kisiel** reviewed the number of days school was released early or delayed due to weather, in addition to the number of snow days. Due to the high amount of class time that has been lost, Dr. Kisiel has decided to cancel the half day for professional development, originally scheduled for February 5<sup>th</sup> and rescheduled for March 5<sup>th</sup>. March 5<sup>th</sup> will now be a full day of school.

## **I. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Ms. Cruz** reported that the Policy Committee met this evening prior to the Board meeting. The following policies or potential policies were discussed:

- Employment of former Board members. The committee is not in favor of this policy and will not be bringing this policy forward.
- Policy 1220 – Public Participation at Board of Education meetings. The agenda revisions area will be looked at closer.
- Policy Regarding Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This is regarding students with a 504 plan. This policy will be replaced.
- Policy 4012 will replace the above policy.

**Mr. Scappaticci** reported that all members of the Policy Committee were present, including Ms. Hagenow, Ms. Pazda, Ms. Cruz, and Mr. Scappaticci along with Ms. Matfess as well.



**J. PUBLIC COMMENTS** (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, hopes the Board understands why he is so stern about his comments earlier. He has concerns with Washington that continue to come true and it is the bodies in town, not individuals, that he has issue with. He is not sure he applauds the person who made the anonymous comment or whether he is a coward. On this agenda, policy 1400 parent involvement, and Mr. Aiken read part of the policy. If the school is not in the student's neighborhood, how can they understand that child. If the parents can't walk to their child's school and do not have two cars, how can the parent be an active participant. Saying you are going to close the school in the neighborhood creates a bad environment in the school. He cannot find a policy on how to get his school on the mayor's preferred school list. He would like Washington on that list. He hopes the Board does not decide to close his school, or any school. Washington is part of his family.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports #4 on the Consent Calendar. Regarding the school facilities reports from Mr. Till and Mr. Ziegler, they were good reports. He is glad the teacher evaluation program is being put on hold by the state. He feels it is good to get input from teachers, parents, and students themselves. He wants to see them succeed. He would like input from Kelly substitute teachers as well. The Buckley report was good. Mr. Stringfellow pointed out some things East Hartford schools are doing. He recommended an article on income inequality and child maltreatment. Mr. Stringfellow would like more families of color involved, whether they have children or not.

Norm DeLaura, 421 Parker Street, has two children who attend Buckley. He thinks Principal Daly and the PTA do a fantastic job. It is a good community and the school is doing a fantastic job.

**K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

None.

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.**

**Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Stafford seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor. Adjournment 8:51 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci  
Board Secretary